Life on a Fishing Trawler

by

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Since the adoption of a resolution on fishermen's conditions of work by the International Labour Conference at its 28th Session (Maritime) at Seattle in 1946, the Office has given increased attention to the problems of these workers. It recently published a report on the conditions of work and welfare of fishermen in 27 countries, which it is hoped will provide the member countries of the I.L.O. with a wider basis for determining what type of international action may be feasible.[1]

As part of the continuing study of conditions in the fishing industry, a member of the Maritime Division of the Office recently spent six days at sea on a Belgian trawler to gain first-hand knowledge of conditions and problems in the industry, and the following article is an account of his observations and discussions with the members of the crew. It should be emphasised that the choice of a Belgian trawler was not made because working and living standards were regarded as particularly high or particularly low but only because the invitation which made the trip possible was received from the Secretary of the Fishermen's Section of the International Transportworkers' Federation, who made the necessary arrangements through the Union of Belgian Transportworkers.

THE *Liliane*, a medium-size Belgian trawler, was being made ready to go to sea. The stores for the crew had been put aboard, the fuel tanks had been filled with diesel oil, and shaved ice had been loaded into the hold earlier in the morning. A retired fisherman, 72 years of age, was on board cleaning the quarters and making sure that the final preparations were carried out. By

[1] INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE, Studies and Reports, New Series, No. 30 : *Conditions of Work in the Fishing Industry* (Geneva, 1952).

10 a.m. all members of the crew were waiting at the dock. The two deckhands, Edward Gallebout and Julien Niellwenhuyse, were accompanied by their wives, who had come to see the boat sail. Two trucks came alongside and put on six cases of beer for the trip. The skipper, Eugene Major, arrived and had a short consultation with the owner. It was decided that the trip would be for six days or seven, according to the success of the fishing and the weather. The skipper would inform the owner by radio-telephone of the exact day of arrival so that arrangements could be made for placing the vessel in dry dock for the scraping and painting of the hull.

The vessels in the Belgian fishing fleet have been classified by size and horsepower in five categories and the *Liliane*, which is 53 feet long, 30 feet wide and has an engine that develops over 200 h.p., belongs to type III, the most numerous group. Boats of this type are designed to go fishing in and beyond the North Sea up to 1,000 miles from their home port, and to remain at sea for as long as two weeks at a time. They have accommodation for and carry a crew of five or six men : skipper, mate, engineer, two deckhands and a boy of 16 to 18 years of age. The *Liliane* carried no boy, as it had been agreed between crew and owner that the boy's duties (which usually include washing dishes, cleaning the ship, helping with the catch, etc.) would be carried out by the members of the crew, who would divide between them the percentage of the catch normally allotted to the youngest member.

The *Liliane*, like the other vessels of her class, has a high bow to meet rough seas and maximum working space on the forward deck to land and process the catch. She is equipped with two winches for bringing in and letting out the net. There is a small, enclosed deckhouse containing the bridge, which is raised two feet above the level of the deck ; aft of this, there is a small galley where an opening with a perpendicular ladder leads to the crew's quarters below. A life-raft is secured to the top of the galley cabin, and a lifeboat large enough to accommodate all members of the crew is situated on the deck aft.

Although many of the medium-size Belgian fishing vessels are of steel construction, the *Liliane* has a hull of wood. She was built during the last war and was nearing completion when the hostilities in Europe came to an end. Fearing that the boat might be lost if port installations were demolished by the withdrawing forces, the owner secretly opened the sea cocks and let the vessel sink to the bottom at the quay side. When she was later refloated and fitted out for service, it was found (according to the crew) that the submersion had permanently sealed the joints and made the boat a tight and highly seaworthy vessel.

The Journey Out

The *Liliane*, surrounded by a large number of other trawlers of similar size and build, passed slowly through the locks leading to the harbour entrance ; from there, the vessels set their individual courses to whichever fishing ground had been decided upon by the skipper. Many would head north and in a day and a half or two days begin fishing off the Danish coast. Others would go north and then west to fish in the waters of the Irish Sea and remain away for about two weeks. But, unlike most, the skipper of the *Liliane* set a course of west by north-west towards the eastern coast of England. After a trip of about seven hours he would be ready to start fishing near the Outer Gabbard banks, not far from Harwich. These fishing grounds are not popular with many Belgian skippers as they are considered dangerous and littered with wreckage from the war. However, on the bridge of the *Liliane*, apart from the usual navigation instruments of a modern vessel, there is an electronic depth sounder, which registers the depth of the water and contour of the bottom at one-second intervals and gives an immediate indication of any unusual obstacle lying under the vessel.

Moreover, the skipper had spent much of his life fishing in these waters. Like the other members of the crew, he attended the town-supported fishermen's school in Ostend, which offers pre-sea training in navigation, wireless telegraphy, engine maintenance, etc., to boys of from 12 to 15 years of age. At 14 he went to sea for the first time but returned to the school later to take the further instruction needed for a skipper's certificate. At 20 he first took command of a vessel and was for some time the youngest skipper in the Ostend fleet. When his country was invaded at the beginning of the war, he took his wife to England like many other Belgian fishermen, and fished in the waters off the English coast. With his training and experience and the technical instruments at his disposal, he considered that he was well equipped to exploit the fishing grounds near the Outer Gabbard banks, which are close to home so that a larger proportion of the trip can be devoted to actual fishing, and are also more productive as fewer boats fish there.

As the *Liliane* moved out at her full speed of nine knots towards the open sea, the engineer, Richard Vanderstraeten, left the engine room and came on deck for the first time. He said that the boat's engine was dependable and gave little trouble. It was, perhaps, too powerful for the size of the vessel. In extremely rough seas this was an advantage, but under normal conditions a less powerful engine would serve as well. As the usual trawling

speed while fishing was only 2½ knots, the full speed of the engine could only be used on the trip to and from the fishing grounds. During the winter months when bad weather sometimes made it useless to leave port, the crews of vessels with engines of less horsepower were able to draw unemployment benefit, whereas the crew of the *Liliane* were not. They considered that eligibility for compensation in such cases should not be based upon engine horsepower but upon the size or tonnage of the vessel, as this was the only valid factor in judging safe and efficient navigability in bad weather.

The " chief " is 49 years of age and the oldest member of the crew. He first went to sea on a school ship at the age of seven when his father, who was also a fisherman, died of burns received in the engine room of a coal-fired vessel. Like the skipper, the mate and one of the deckhands, he speaks English as well as Flemish, but his facility is perhaps even greater than theirs as he lived in England and fished off the English coast during both world wars. His only child, a son of 17, is training to be an aircraft mechanic, and the chief is happy that he does not want to become a fisherman.

It was said that many fishermen were encouraging their sons to take up other occupations, as their fathers considered fishing a hard, dangerous and comparatively underpaid trade. Since the great majority of young recruits to the industry have in the past come from fishermen's families and a large number of veteran fishermen were killed during and directly after the war as the result of exploding mines and other war action, the number of fishermen—especially young fishermen who are the ones in greatest demand—is steadily decreasing. This situation has resulted in almost continuous employment for the existing labour force, particularly during the season of high demand for fish from September to Easter. As the tendency towards fewer children in fishermen's families becomes more apparent, this condition will be even more pronounced.

Meals and Accommodation

In addition to his primary responsibility of tending the engine the chief also acts as cook, and soon after leaving port he began to prepare the midday meal on the small coal-stove. This consisted of steak fried in butter, boiled potatoes and green beans. The crew pay for all food bought for their consumption during the trip. The foodstuffs used by the chief to prepare the midday meal, such as potatoes, bread, meat, fats, vegetables and salad greens, are ordered by him for delivery on board before the boat sails, and the cost is divided

equally among all members of the crew. The evening meal is also prepared by the chief but, except on the first day, this consists of fish taken from the day's catch and fried in deep fat. In addition to the common stock of food, each member of the crew brings aboard in his fisherman's metal basket a supply of other edibles according to individual taste, usually including butter, fruit, cheese and eggs. Each man can prepare whatever he likes for breakfast and supplement the fish fare served at night, although only one man at a time can prepare food over the single cooking hole of the stove.

When ready, the food is handed in large pans down the ladder to the crew's quarters on the lower deck. The quantity of food eaten by the crew is twice or three times as much as is usually consumed by comparable workers ashore, which may be due to the strenuous timetable of day and night work during the actual fishing.

The crew's eating and sleeping quarters are contained in a space approximately 10 feet wide and 12 feet long which is narrowed and rounded at one end, corresponding to the shape of the vessel's stern. A bench 1½ feet wide and 2 feet high runs around this space, and here the men sit and eat from enamel pans. On each side of the vessel, directly behind the bench, there is a bunk 6 feet long, 2 feet wide and 2 feet high, lying against the skin of the boat. These lower bunks must be entered through a narrow opening at the centre, by lying on the bench, inserting the feet and legs, sliding down towards the bottom of the bunk, and then bringing in the trunk and head. Two sliding panels at the sides of the opening can be closed in case of very rough or cold weather, but this opening provides the only means for the entry of fresh air. A second tier contains two additional bunks on each side, making a total of six. The upper bunks are deeper and easier of access.

Each bunk is equipped with electric light, but the wiring is old and lies exposed against the skin of the vessel. Every man provides his own mattress, pillow and blankets. There is a small shelf at the head of each bunk to hold books and other personal articles, and a life-jacket at the bottom. The quarters are lit by two naked electric bulbs, one on each side of the vessel, and a 12-inch port hole let into the open deck above. The radio-telephone equipment (ship-to-shore) is installed at the forward starboard side of the cabin, and a door opposite it on the port side gives direct entry to the engine room. In the centre there is a small coal-stove for heating, which can also be used in winter months to keep food warm.

Each man has a cupboard of about 1 foot square in which to keep his private food and personal belongings, and under the bench on three sides there are spaces to hold eating and cooking utensils. The dishes in which food is served and from which it is eaten are washed daily by the chief. Knives, forks and spoons

are wiped off by each user on his trousers or shirt and put away until the next meal.

The only fresh-water supply in the vessel is located in the galley. After unscrewing a valve and pumping, the water comes through the opening of a small pipe near the surface of the deck. There are no washing, shower or toilet facilities of any kind, apart from a large galvanised can on the open deck that is set inside an old rubber tyre to keep it from moving. The inconvenience caused by such lack of facilities, particularly during rough and stormy weather, can easily be imagined.

After eating a hearty meal, during which the skipper had been replaced for a brief period on the bridge by Ted, one of the deckhands, the crew turned into their bunks and the skipper went back to hold the *Liliane* on her course to the fishing grounds. All members of the crew, including the skipper, were avid readers of books and periodicals in Flemish or English. While waiting to clear the locks before leaving port, Ted had gone to the canal control office and collected eight books which had been issued to the crew by the municipal library. Later, during rest periods between bringing in the net, all crew members read for a short time before going to sleep.

The First Trawl

At 5 p.m. a loud summons came down from the skipper. It was time to prepare the net for the first trawl. During trips to and from the fishing grounds the nets rest on pegs set on top of the gunwales along each side of the vessel. The port-side net is the one usually used in fishing, and the one on the starboard side is kept in reserve in case of loss or serious damage. Each net is about 40 feet long and about 40 feet wide at the forward end. When dragged through the water it resembles a large cone. The mouth of the net is kept open by two otter boards at the sides attached to the boat by wire cables, and by small floats at the top. Along the bottom of the opening is a heavy chain covered by rubber rings to withstand damage when the net is being pulled over the sea bottom. At the narrow end there is a reinforced bag covered at the bottom with rubber sheeting.

As two members of the crew spread and examined the net for possible holes, the other two led the wire cables through blocks and pulleys to the winches. At a signal from the skipper the net was thrown over the port side and let out a short distance. Returning to the bridge, the skipper advanced the idling engine to full speed and swung the boat in a full circle to port. After a quarter of the circle had been completed he gave another signal and the remaining length of cable was let out as fast as possible. When

the required length of tow had been attained the winches were braked and the speed of the vessel reduced to 2½ knots.

According to the depth indicator, the *Liliane* was trawling in water of about 16 fathoms between two shallow banks. There was a slight westerly wind and a course of north by north-west was set. For the next three hours, the vessel would trawl with the tide some 15 to 20 miles off the eastern coast of England. As there was nothing to do but wait the allotted time before the trawl was brought in, the watch was changed and the skipper and other members of the crew went below.

Working Hours

During the actual fishing the watch is changed with every new trawl, each member of the crew except the engineer taking turns. While the net is being brought in and let out, and while the catch is being processed, the skipper remains on the bridge and all members of the crew—including the engineer, although he is not obliged to do so—work at putting the fish below deck. Therefore, if the net is not brought up in a damaged condition and no other difficulties are encountered (a situation that is most unusual) six or seven trawls may reasonably be expected during a 24-hour period, and each of the four men standing watch will be on duty in the wheelhouse once every 15 hours. It normally takes from 45 minutes to one hour to process the catch, depending upon the number and type of fish caught, so that each man should have between 11 and 12 hours of work a day.

But the fishing operations seldom proceed so smoothly, and in practice the hours of work are much longer. According to the crew, during the winter months when the fish are more plentiful and prices higher, it is not unusual to work 24 hours without rest, except for short periods for meals. When the sea is rough and the weather stormy, the net is almost always brought up in a damaged state, and often requires seven or eight hours' work by all hands to repair it. When the boat is surrounded by thick fog it is necessary to have two men on continuous watch. The crew estimated that their hours of work at sea averaged between 18 and 20 a day.

With the first trawl out, the mate, Franz Major, took over the watch. He is the skipper's brother and the youngest of a family of five boys, all of whom are fishermen, and one girl, who is married to a fisherman. Their father, also skipper of a fishing boat, died in 1937 after being caught and crushed between an otter board and its steel frame on deck. Franz holds a skipper's certificate but does not consider that he has yet sufficient knowledge of the fishing

grounds to take command of a boat. His title of " mate " is more honorary than real, as no such certificated officer is carried on boats of the size of the *Liliane*. His duties are mainly the same as those of the two deckhands, but he draws an additional ½ per cent. share of the catch for carrying out the added responsibilities of sorting and icing the fish in the hold after they are caught, and placing them in baskets before the catch is unloaded on arrival in port. He lives with his wife and baby in a new four-room apartment near the fish quay, for which they pay a rent of 700 francs a month.

At 9.15 p.m. the mate gave a shout to the men below, the skipper again took control of the vessel, and all hands pulled on their rubber hip boots and tied on rubber aprons before bringing in the first trawl. The steel clamp holding the two cables of the net tight against the after part of the boat to prevent fouling was released, the skipper steered sharply to port after increasing speed, and Ted and Franz at the two winches began pulling in the net as soon as the vessel had completed a half turn. The cables were pulled in until the otter boards were clear of the water and rested against their frames ; the rope ends of the net were then detached from the otter boards and led round the warping ends of the winches until the orifice of the net had cleared the side of the vessel, when it was dropped on deck.

With the vessel at a complete stop, the skipper and all members of the crew, standing abreast along the rail, began pulling in the net by hand. With each roll of the boat the men reached further down the net, and then pulled with all their strength, bringing a foot or two on to the deck with each lunge. When the bag was near enough, a rope sling was put around it and, by means of a wire running over a boom in the bows to the winch, the bag and its contents were swung up over the forward deck on the port side. The mate bent quickly under the dripping, squirming bag to untie the knot at the bottom. With a sudden jerk the knot came loose and the jumping fish and other sea creatures tumbled in a mass on the railed-in deck.

The first catch was very meagre : three lobsters, a shark, and a few dogfish, turbot and skates. The skipper decided to go immediately to another fishing ground, and while the crew repaired a small tear in the net he headed due north at full speed. Processing the catch took very little time. The fish worth saving were thrown one by one to the starboard side of the deck where Julien washed them with sea water from a rubber hose. The dogfish and skates require no cleaning and were thrown directly into the hold, where Franz sorted them into different compartments and covered them with a layer of shaved ice. The turbot and the shark were cut

open and gutted before being thrown below. Lobsters and sea snails are considered as "stocker", the whole proceeds after sale belonging to the crew. Lobsters are kept alive in a barrel of fresh sea water until the boat returns to port.

Trawling Continues

The second trawl, brought in at 1.15 a.m. on the second day, contained a good catch and the skipper decided to continue fishing in the same area, changing direction from north to south and then back to north every six hours with the changing tide. During the whole of the second and third days the catches were all average or good in quantity and quality. Not knowing what type of fish is likely to be in highest demand on the day when the catch is landed, every skipper prefers to have as wide a selection as possible. This time, however, it was known from conversations over the wireless with the skippers of other boats which had arrived in port that soles were fetching a good price. The crew were glad, therefore, that the ground chosen was usually a good one for soles and that an increasing number of these fish were brought up in each trawl.

Welfare

The skipper enjoyed listening to the wireless receiver every morning and evening when, for a certain period of time, the crews of the Ostend boats are permitted to talk to one another over an allotted wavelength. On the morning of the fourth day he spoke to a brother, the skipper of a large boat, who was returning to port after having been at sea for 18 days. A second wavelength is reserved for the use of the Ostend radio station which relays messages and even telephone calls to the fishing vessels, and a third wavelength is for the use of the boats in speaking to the Ostend station. Much to the disappointment of the other members of the crew, the skipper did not enjoy listening to music or other regular radio programmes.

As the fishing was progressing smoothly, with at least two hours between every trawl, the crew had time to talk over personal problems and, among other things, to discuss what they would do during the annual lay-up period. Once each year the boats are laid up for a period of from four to five weeks in order to be completely overhauled. This usually takes place during the summer months (a period of light demand for fish) in order to make the boat ready for the hard winter season ahead. In the case of the *Liliane*, the overhaul this year will take place during the month of August. The only member of the crew who continues to be

employed during this period is the engineer, who helps in dismantling and repairing the engine. For this work he receives 200 francs for each day of employment. The other members of the crew will be unemployed and will therefore be eligible to receive unemployment benefit amounting to 100 francs a day. The unemployment insurance scheme is administered by the trade union, and contributions for its support are included in the union dues of 15 francs a week paid by each member.

By the time the annual lay-up period arrives, most of the fishermen will already have taken their annual paid holidays directly after Easter. To qualify for the maximum of six days' annual leave, a fisherman must work at least 275 days during a 12-month period, his daily leave pay being based on total annual income divided by the number of working days. The annual leave scheme and the compensation paid for eight public holidays are part of the National Social Security System administered by the Government. It also includes sickness and accident insurance (medical care and hospitalisation) and old-age pensions. Each fisherman pays a contribution of 16 francs a day, and the owner pays 32 francs a day for each of his employees.

Until noon of the fourth day, the fishing continued without serious incident. At one time the boat was brought to a complete halt when the dragging net caught on a high promontory on the sea-bed, but when the trawl was brought in it was found that the net had scarcely been damaged at all. On two other occasions unusual objects were brought up—a ship's anchor, which was kept to be sold later as scrap iron, and a large plank. The objects caught by the net are usually of no value and are only a source of annoyance to the crew as landing the net is made more difficult; on the previous trip, however, the landing gear of an aeroplane was found and later sold. During the period directly after the war it was not unusual, according to the skipper, to find unexploded mines and depth charges in the net.

On two successive occasions when the trawl was brought in during the afternoon of the fourth day, serious tears were found in the net and the catch was almost negligible. Again at 4 a.m. on the fifth day a hole was found which required more than three hours' work by all hands to repair. While this was being done, the skipper headed the boat south to try fishing elsewhere. But the next trawl, brought in at 10 a.m., was even more discouraging; a large section of the net had been torn away. As much trawling time had already been lost, the skipper decided to put out the starboard reserve net while the port net was being repaired. This was brought in at 1.30 p.m. but contained very few fish. At

4.30 p.m. the port-side net, which had by then been repaired, was again put out, but when brought in at 7.30 p.m. the double-strength bag at the end had been ripped and not a single fish was caught. The crew were very discouraged and the frustrations caused by the events of the previous 30 hours began to be evident. The men had worked hard during almost the entire period and yet they would receive no compensation for it.

The skipper again changed direction and headed north at full speed. The net would not go out again until after midnight. He believed that the damage was not only due to the rough ground over which they had been trawling, but also to the action of the spring tide which was exceptionally strong that day. The trawls during the remainder of that night were brought in without damage but the catch was still small, and on the morning of the sixth day the skipper notified the owner that he would return to port early the following morning.

The Return Journey

After this decision had been taken, the crew were in higher spirits and accepted the misfortunes of the voyage philosophically. The first two days' fishing had been quite productive, and their previous trip had been satisfactory. After fishing for nine days the catch had been sold for a total of 55,000 francs. Of this gross return, the skipper received 7 per cent. (4,065 francs), the engineer 6 per cent. (3,480 francs), the mate 5½ per cent. (3,190 francs) and the two deckhands 5 per cent. each (2,900 francs), or a total of 16,535 francs.

Conditions of Employment

There are no collective agreements for the crews of vessels of the size of the *Liliane*, or for any of the crews of fishing vessels in Ostend except the men employed on the few large trawlers that fish the waters near Iceland and remain at sea for 18 days or longer. These receive a minimum monthly wage plus a small share of the proceeds of the catch. All other fishermen receive only a share of the gross proceeds, as laid down in the ship's articles, which varies in percentage amount from boat to boat. In most cases the skipper alone is engaged directly by the owner, and he is given a fairly free hand in selecting the members of his crew. When signing on for the first time with a vessel, the men must go to the Office of the Maritime Commissariat with the skipper (who is accompanied by the owner) and present medical and birth certificates. As the skipper and crew usually remain on the same vessel for several

months or even for years, the signing-on procedure is not repeated for each trip but only when a change takes place in the composition of the crew.

From the gross shares paid to the crew, income tax of about 10½ per cent. is deducted at source, and any necessary adjustments are made after individual returns have been filed at the end of the year. These figures are further reduced by the payments amounting to 16 francs a day for social security contributions, and by the trade union dues of 15 francs a week which include the unemployment insurance contribution. The cost of food stores purchased for common use usually amounts to between 200 and 300 francs per man for a trip of nine days' duration, to which must be added the cost of extra food brought on board by each man. As the crew furnish their own bedding, eating utensils and waterproof clothing, a portion of the purchase or replacement cost of these items corresponding to the period of the trip should also be included in the calculation.

The members of the crew of the *Liliane* did not agree whether in the long run they would be better off if, instead of being paid solely by a percentage of the sale of the catch, they were paid a minimum monthly wage plus a share in the catch. Some of them felt that, if such a system of remuneration were applied to crews of medium-size boats, there would probably be a reduction in the percentage share for the crew and this would mean a loss of net income. Others did not think that the introduction of this type of payment system would necessarily mean a reduction in the shares at present enjoyed and considered that, even if there were a small reduction, the advantages of having a basic minimum wage would be sufficient to outweigh the possible loss of uncertain income.

The earning of a living wage under the present share system is entirely dependent on the knowledge and good fortune of the skipper and on the weather. Although these fishermen are no longer superstitious and are fully aware of the value of modern equipment (such as the depth sounder and radio) in aiding them to bring in more profitable catches and to avoid accidents, they are quite sure that the question of luck is the most important single factor determining the quantity and quality of the fish caught. Julien, one of the deckhands on the *Liliane*, possesses a skipper's certificate and has on two occasions commanded a vessel ; but he has, for the time being at least, given it up because he receives higher pay by working for a 5 per cent. share on the *Liliane* (where the skipper is considered lucky) than he received by working for 6 or 7 per cent. as a skipper.

All of the crew agreed that the greatest advantage to them of a system involving payment of a basic minimum wage would be that

they would draw at least some money, even though only a small amount, on the one or two days spent in port between trips or in winter when the boat cannot go to sea. Under the present system, the fishermen receive no compensation for the days spent in port and, as these are a complete loss of time from the point of view of earnings, the men often return to sea before they have rested from the previous trip. The *Liliane* usually remains in port only one day after a trip of six days, and only two days after a trip of nine days or longer. No unemployment benefit is payable for a period of less than three days.

The Owner's Share

It is clear that, if the crew of the *Liliane* are paid a total of 28.5 per cent. of the proceeds from the sale of the catch, the owner receives the remaining 71.5 per cent. or 38,465 francs. But the expenses incurred by him are more difficult to calculate than are those of the crew. The following information on this question was furnished by the skipper, and may not be entirely complete. During a nine-day trip, the *Liliane* consumes 2½ to 3 tons of fuel oil; taking the larger amount, this item would amount, at 2.50 francs a litre, to 7,500 francs. The lubricating oil used during the trip costs about 300 francs. The portion of the average annual expenses for the repair and replacement of nets and gear corresponding to this trip amounts to approximately 3,000 francs. The social security contributions paid by the owner on behalf of the five members of the crew come to 1,440 francs. For a trip of nine days, 6 tons of shaved ice are consumed, costing 600 francs.

The amount to be set aside to cover the depreciation and replacement costs of the vessel can only be estimated. A boat of the size of the *Liliane* costs approximately 4 million francs, and is normally expected to have a useful life of from 20 to 25 years. Taking the less optimistic figure, about 200,000 francs per year—or 5,555 francs for the period under consideration—must be set aside for replacement. The quarterly scraping and painting of the hull costs 2,000 francs and, on the basis of last year's experience, 136,000 francs is paid for the annual overhaul. Proportionately, for the period under review, these charges together would amount to about 4,000 francs. No information was available concerning insurance charges.

The total of all expenses, both known and estimated, came to 22,395 francs, leaving a profit of about 16,000 francs for the period of nine days' fishing, less insurance charges, taxes, and any other payments which may not have been included above. Although the profits realised vary widely between trips, depending on the

season, weather, size of the catch and volume of demand, it can be seen that this trip was about average for the length of time spent at sea when compared with the total gross proceeds of the *Liliane* for the year 1951 of over 1,500,000 francs.

The last trawl was brought in at 6 p.m. of the sixth day. After the fish had been cleaned and iced, it was estimated that the total catch for the trip amounted to approximately 70 baskets (50 kilograms per basket) of dogfish, turbot, skate, shark, etc., and 450 kilograms of sole. This was considered only slightly less than an average catch for a trip of six days and, in view of the long series of damaged trawls on the fourth and fifth days, the number of fish caught was greater than had been expected by the crew.

As the skipper set a course toward Ostend and fixed the controls at full speed ahead, the other crew members secured the gear on deck and hung up the nets. At 9 p.m. both Ted and Julien sent out messages of their expected arrival time over the ship-to-shore radio, in the hope that their families ashore would receive the broadcasts on their home wireless sets. For the first time during the trip, several members of the crew washed and shaved.

At 3.15 a.m. of the seventh day the *Liliane* entered the gates of the fishing basin canal, and soon after tied up at the fish quay. Unloading of the catch began immediately, and by 7 a.m. the crew would know what return each would receive for the six days and nights of hard work.